



HIGHLAND POLICE SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE!

GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • MARCH 2016



Facade improvements, left, are under way at the former Bantam site, which sits cater-cornered from the proposed Vyto's Pharmacy development. [JOSH CARLASCIO PHOTO]

SOUTHERN GATEWAY PLAN

Highland's southern corridor gets boost from plans to redevelop former Finke's and South Side Bantam sites

Two projects slated for private development will significantly change the landscape at the southern gateway to the downtown shopping district.

The principles at Vyto's Pharmacy and the new owner of 8836 Kennedy have requested approval and an assist from the town for projects that will put back into use two long-dormant properties.

"Plans for these two properties are going to give a fresh, new look to that area," Council President Bernie Zemen said. "These two businesses will be rock-solid additions to the town and a visible sign that Highland is on the move."

Owners of Vyto's Pharmacy received the nod of the Redevelopment Commission for their proposed plan to replace the existing Finke's building with a two-story, 10,000 sq. ft. brick building. The property has not yet been purchased.

Meanwhile, the owner of the South Side Bantam property has received a Facade Improvement Grant to convert the long-time grocery store into

ABOUT THE PROJECTS

VYTO'S PHARMACY: The proposed Vyto's site is projected to house its headquarters, a specialty pharmacy and additional retail/commercial space. The company will spend \$1.3 million in addition to the cost of the property, creating 40 construction trade jobs. The expansion of the Vyto's brand will add four jobs with salaries totaling \$560,000 annually. The Economic Development Commission sent a favorable recommendation to the Town Council, which will make a final determination.

INDIANA FARM BUREAU INSURANCE: The new owner of 8836 Kennedy Ave. has already invested \$64,805 in facade improvements. The roof has been raised at the rear of the building and the number of windows on the east and south sides has been increased. Landscaping and signage will be added this spring. The Redevelopment Commission is prepared to contribute \$19,442 to the facade portion of the project.

an Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance office.

The heavily traveled Kennedy Avenue corridor carries nearly 30,000 vehicles per day.

"These projects are high-value commercial ventures that any town would value," Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said. "We are extremely pleased they chose Highland." 🐦

MAGAZINE RELEASE PARTY

The town is celebrating the art of poetry at a one-of-kind event. Just weeks after opening Highland's newest coffee house, the owners of Sip and Highland Main Street will host a night of readings by poets who hail from Greater Chicago, live music by James Neary and an open mic.

There is no cost to attend. Complimentary refreshments will be served. Copies of Blotterature Literary Magazine will be available for purchase at a discounted price.

WHEN: 6 p.m. **MARCH 19**

WHERE: Sip Coffee House, 2815 Jewett

INFO: Email Managing Editor Julie Larson at blotterature@gmail.com.

LET'S GET SOCIAL!

The Redevelopment Commission is expanding its presence on social media and urging local businesses to tap into this social media resource. The commission is eager to highlight Highland businesses and their events.

INFO: Like Highland Redevelopment Commission on Facebook and follow them on Twitter @HighlandRDC.

KIOSK PROGRAM

Highland kiosks offer marketing opportunities for businesses in the downtown and bike path areas. Kiosk panels, which start at \$50 per month, are available to businesses, organizations and nonprofits.

INFO: Visit the town website - www.highland.in.gov - to download complete program details.



... TOWN TICKER ...

Save the Date! The **16TH ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE** will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 7 at Gibson Woods Nature Center. **INFO:** Visit gw-wildones.org or call (219) 844-3188. Calling all baseball players! There's still time to sign up for the **HIGHLAND BABE RUTH AND TRAVEL** teams. **INFO:** Call President Dan Vassar at (219) 924-1945.

CRIME WATCH MEETING IN NEW COMMUNITY ROOM

Beginning in March, the bimonthly Crime Watch meetings will be held in the Community Room at the new Highland Police Department.

Learn about current crime statistics in your neighborhood and take a tour of the department's new digs.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, **MARCH 9**

WHERE: HPD Community Room
INFO: Please call (219) 838-3184 or email sanderson@highland.in.gov.

SEEKING DOOR PRIZES ...

As part of the Crime Watch Program, officers Shawn Anderson and Brandon Norris hand out door prizes to those in attendance. Business owners interested in participating in the program may donate gift certificates in a small monetary amount — such as \$5. In exchange, the officers will promote your business as a program supporter.

INFO: Please call (219) 838-3184 or email bnorris@highland.in.gov or sanderson@highland.in.gov.



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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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HIGHLAND FIREFIGHTERS RESPOND TO 9 EMERGENCIES IN 12 HOURS

High winds that downed power lines, ripped roofs from buildings and tore signs from their moorings had Highland firefighters responding to a record nine calls in just 12 hours.

Without the wind, Chief Bill Timmer said the department would have been summoned for just two calls Feb. 19.

"Severe weather always presents challenges, but high winds top the list," he said. "We had a fatal car accident at 6 that morning, and then we responded to back-to-back calls where roofs blew off three different structures and in between there were calls about downed power lines."

Timmer said the department was grateful that in each case, people were able to get out of the buildings safely and then call for assistance.

"Spring is coming and with it, we will have more storms and high winds," he said. "We want everyone in town to stay safe no matter what the weather." 🐦

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Severe weather resulting in hazardous situations can happen anytime and anywhere. To stay safe, Fire Chief Bill Timmer offers up some hard-and-fast rules for calling 911 for emergency assistance:

- ✓ Never try to fix a weather-related emergency on your own. Winds strong enough to rip off a roof have probably already damaged electrical and gas lines.
- ✓ If you see a sparking power line or a line on the ground, stay clear from it and everything around it.
- ✓ It's the same advice when large tree limbs fall over power lines or onto a house. "Get all individuals to a safe place," Timmer said. "Then, call us for help."



PUBLIC WORKS OPERATIONS DIRECTOR MAKING HEADWAY ON BIG PROJECTS

Mark Knesek is convinced that everything he has done, professionally, up to now has prepared him for his new role as Operations Director for Highland Public Works.

That experience includes nearly 37 years working for Munster Public Works and eight years serving as a Highland Sanitary Board Commissioner, overseeing projects that significantly increased efficiency within the system and decreased the likelihood of flooding.

"This could not have come at a better time," he said. "We're making headway on big projects and have others in-the-works in every sector — sanitary, water, streets and snow removal."

Knesek has his sights set on making Highland the No. 1 community in the region.

"I set the bar high with a goal that is completely achievable," he said. "Everyone in this department takes pride in their work. I was surprised and pleased when we received many calls from residents after the February blizzard thanking us for doing a great job." 🐦



KENNEDY WATER LINE

The Kennedy Avenue water line project — on a road that clocks 30,000 vehicles per day — is ahead of schedule. "The council was clear when they hired me that the Kennedy Avenue project had to be completed in June," Operations Director Mark Knesek said. "Grimmer Construction has been able to work through most of the winter and I am happy to report we are well ahead of where we thought the project would be at this point."

COMMUNITY BAND



Highland struck up the band in 1989 and the ensemble that showcases the community's talent has been providing beautiful music ever since.

The inspiration of Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin when he served as the Park Department's Recreation Director, Highland Community Band is the longest performing group of its kind in Lake County, a record that has captured the attention of the Bicentennial committee.

The Highland Community Band entry will also showcase the orchestra's highly talented conductor – Greg Jasek – who studied under Boston Pops' own Leonard Bernstein and was asked by Maestro Georg Solti to assist with recording sessions at New York's Carnegie Hall.

"We have a wonderful time and continue to run the community band as we always have," Jasek said.

"We select our music democratically. We look to give every individual the opportunity to play and grow in ways that work for them. Sometimes that means a solo. Other times, it means a musician serving as guest conductor."

SPRING CONCERT

Sound the trumpets and celebrate spring at this month's Highland Community Band performance. Admission is free.

WHEN: 7 p.m. MARCH 18

WHERE: Highland High Monbeck Auditorium.

WANT TO JOIN?

This band of volunteers is open to anyone high school age or older.

Rehearsals are held during the school year at 7 p.m. Wednesdays in the Highland High School band room.

INFO: Email Greg Jasek at maestroflute@att.net.



NEW STEP MACHINE

Thanks to a \$500 donation from the Highland Rotary Club and a persistent health club member, Lincoln Fitness Center has a new NuStep T4r machine.

"This piece of exercise equipment is great for those with mobility issues or post-rehab patients," Recreation Director Dave Byers said. "We've had one NuStep since 2013, but the need for a second was brought to our attention by Fitness Center member Nancy Tuskan who started a petition to show that the need was there for a second machine."

INFO: To learn more about the Fitness Center at Lincoln Community Center, visit www.highlandparks.com.

BASEBALL ALUM WEEKEND

Celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Highland Trojan's 1991 Final Four team with an appearance before Friday's 4:30 game. Each player will get their jersey and a scrapbook created by Coach Miller. Mark Spain, of Traditions Restaurant, will host an Alumni Social Hour at 8 p.m. The evening includes free appetizers, cash bar, 10% discount on dinner entrees and Highland baseball merchandise available for purchase.

Can you still hit the long ball? Saturday's festivities feature an All-Alumni Home Run Derby at 2 p.m. The first 30 players to make the \$30 donation will compete for Traditions gift certificates and receive a Dri-Fit baseball shirt.

WHEN: APRIL 22-23

WHERE: Highland High School and Traditions Restaurant.

INFO: Email John Bogner at highlandtrojansbaseball@yahoo.com.

FALL FESTIVAL RETURNS IN OCTOBER TO DOWNTOWN HIGHLAND

A newly minted Fall Festival has been added to the town calendar slated for late October. Council of Community Events President John Breslin said the festival will feature a decidedly autumnal theme - with plans to feature the foods that make fall famous along with a carnival and live music - all on the grounds of Main Square Park.

"We went back to the drawing board after the Labor Day festival two years ago. This festival is going to be more in line with what we offered at the Cabbage Fest, which was part of Highland's Centennial," Breslin said.

"This year's festival coincides with Indiana's Bicentennial, but we are hoping - and planning - to make it an annual event."

CALLING ALL VENDORS!

Organizations and churches looking to sell food at the festival should send a letter to the Council of Community Events c/o the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road.

FESTIVAL DATE: OCTOBER 21-23

WHERE: Main Square Park

KICKAROO KARATE KIDS

A fun, non-contact program inspires self-esteem, builds character and prepares young children to face life's challenges. There are no elements of sparring or practicing against one another. Dress comfortably.

AGES: 3-5 years old

WHEN: 3:15-3:50 p.m. or 4-4:35 p.m. Mondays,

MARCH 7 - APRIL 11

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$47 residents/ \$52 nonresidents

ONLINE CODE: 348026

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

JUNIOR PAINT NIGHT

Our trained Instructor will show junior artists how to paint their own 12" x 12" canvas. It's a fun, no-stress class. No experience is required.

AGES: 7-12 years old

WHEN: 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays, **MARCH 9**

(bunny) and **APRIL 13** (flowers)

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$15 residents/ \$18 nonresidents

ONLINE CODE: 348025

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

KIDDIE TREAT DECORATING

Learn how to create a variety of treats from Cathy of Cookielicious Bakery. Students will take home their uniquely decorated creations to show to their family and friends. All supplies are included.

AGES: 5-15 years old

WHEN: 5 p.m. Tuesdays, **MARCH 15**

(Chocolate-dipped Easter treats) and **MAY 3**

(Mother's Day cookie bouquet)

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$15 residents/ \$18 nonresidents

ONLINE CODE: 348009

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

COUTURE COOKIE DECORATING

Learn how to create sweet sugar cookie treats. Students will leave with a half dozen fabulously decorated cookies to share with friends and family. All supplies are included.

AGES: 16 and older

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays, **MARCH 15**

and **APRIL 19**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$18 residents/ \$22 nonresidents

ONLINE CODE: 349011

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

SUMMER SOFTBALL LEAGUE

Registration begins this month for the summer adult softball season, April 17 to Aug. 25. Rosters are limited to 20 players.

15-GAME SEASON & SINGLE-ELIM. TOURNAY

TEAM FEE: \$700 due by **MARCH 31**

14-GAME SEASON

TEAM FEE: \$560 due by **MARCH 31**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.



HIGHLAND'S BREAKFAST WITH THE BUNNY

Join the Easter Bunny and his furry friends for a continental breakfast. The event also features a bike drawing, basket raffles and photos with the bunny.

WHEN: Saturday, **MARCH 19**

SEATINGS: 8:30 and 10 a.m.

WHERE: Highland High cafeteria

TICKETS: \$6 and must be purchased in advanced at Lincoln Center, the chamber office, Griffith YMCA, Centier or First Financial banks.

INFO: Call (219) 923-3666 or visit highlandchamber.com.

NORTH TOWNSHIP'S ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

Grab your basket and head to Wicker Park for the 10th annual North Township Easter Egg Hunt. Children ages 1 to 10 are invited to hunt for filled eggs. DJ music and a visit from the Easter Bunny will be part of the day's activities. Admission is free.

WHEN: 10:30 a.m. **MARCH 19**

WHERE: Wicker Park Pavilion

INFO: Call Events Coordinator Kelly Bridges at (219) 932-2530, ext. 331.



MEN'S OPEN BASKETBALL

Register now for this 18 and over league, which plays a regular season and an end-of-season tournament. Teams are guaranteed at least 10 games and must provide shirts or jerseys that are the same color with numbers on the back. Provide jersey color when registering to avoid duplicates.

WHEN: 6 p.m. Tuesdays, **MARCH 22 - MAY 24**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$480 per team. Deadline is March 15.

ONLINE CODE: 133001

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

CALLING ALL VENDORS!

It's time for the spring craft show and vendor fair, featuring candles, jewelry, handbags, home décor, skin care, gourmet dips and more. Parks and Rec is always looking for new vendors who sell unique items.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 9**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

VENDOR FEES: \$42.70 for 10' x 10' interior space and \$69.55 for 23' x 6' wall booth.

Tables, chairs and cords are not provided.

NOTE: No wholesalers or used/resale items.

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.



HIGHLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT
3315 RIDGE ROAD • HIGHLAND • IN • 46322





“One look is all it took ... our police needed a new place”

Long before its useful life was set to expire, the lower level of the Highland Municipal Building was showing signs of fatigue. Water pressure was virtually nonexistent. Tap water was unfit for drinking. Scant security and staffing levels that exceeded what was anticipated when the department was built in 1969 added to the concern.

By the mid-1990s, the Metropolitan Board of Police Commissioners voiced their concerns that something had to be done – either an overhaul of the existing facility or build new.

“There really wasn’t much difference in cost and we never could have built out enough to accommodate the needs of the department,” Cdr. George Georgeff said. “Early estimates showed a 25 percent difference between building new and renovating. We still would have had an old foundation and support walls.”

The need was there but absent the political will, the project was left on the back burner: Early designs and plans were put back on the shelf for what would be another 15 years.

After the big-ticket flooding problems were addressed, the Town Council made a new department a priority. Councilman Dennis Adams took up where long-time backer Brian Novak left off and was named the council’s liaison on the project. Diagnosed with cancer, Adams did not live to see the new building, but many of his suggestions and ideas were included in the project.

“I had never realized how bad things were in the police department until we went on a tour,” Town Council President Bernie Zemen said. “One look was all it took to realize just how badly our police officers needed a new and better place to do their jobs.”

THE OLD BUILDING

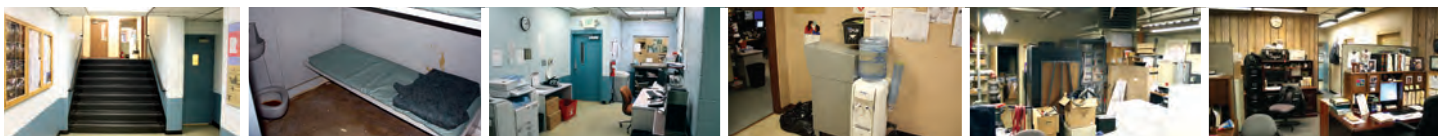
BUILT: 1969

TOWN POPULATION: 16,284

STAFFING: The old building was designed to accommodate only 19 officers and no volunteers.

“This Town Council knew how great the needs of our police were. This new building would have to be constructed with the existing needs in mind and an eye to the future.”

DAN VASSAR
Town Council Vice President



POOR ACCESS

The Municipal Building was built on four levels with a maze of doors and stairways that made security virtually impossible. It also made the department noncompliant with federal guidelines regarding access for those with disabilities.

OLD JAIL CELLS

1969-vintage cells were grandfathered-in, but did not conform to today’s Justice Department standards. In-house traffic patterns forced suspects and victims to cross paths, which served as an additional security risk.

NO WORKSPACE

When the department ran out of room, desks were set up in hallways where equipment was also stored. Paper-shredding had to cease whenever another staff member was on the phone or someone arrived at the records window.

UNSAFE WATER

Burst pipes under the foundation prevented some toilets from flushing on the lower levels. Their location made a fix impossible. Potable water was not safe for drinking. The roof leaked and lower level seeped.

NO STORAGE

Seven off-site facilities housed equipment. Desks were piled high with cases and reports because the department ran out of room. Temporary storage was erected in the boiler room, holding rooms and communication rooms.

LACK OF PRIVACY

Too few interview rooms meant a lack of privacy for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence. Conversations could often be overheard by civilians and volunteers as well as the general public.



New police building suits needs of today – and tomorrow

A decades-old dream come true, the new Highland police station provides ample space for the uniformed division, civilian personnel and Volunteers in Policing to do their jobs today – and for decades to come.

Triple the size of the space they vacated, the new building maximizes natural light, is handicapped accessible and wired to meet the department's computer and communication needs.

High-efficiency lights along with heating and cooling systems take advantage of smart technology available today.

In December, Highland dedicated the new building, welcoming hundreds of residents as well as, current and former members of the department.

Three months later, Police Chief Pete Hojnicky said the new space feels like home.

"This was a long journey. At its conclusion, we were able to deliver a building that suits perfectly the needs of this community and its police department today – and for generations to come," Hojnicky said. "I have to thank the members of the Town Council who saw a need and provided the resources to make it happen."

Other departments toured the facility and told Highland it did the right thing in going bigger.

If this Town Council or a future council decides there is a need for a new town hall, Cdr. George Georgeff said the building is designed to easily connect the two, making it possible to share an entrance, common areas, even an elevator.

"The architect planned for that eventuality," he said. "It involved minor changes and will reduce the price if a decision is made to build new."

THE NEW BUILDING

BUILT: 2015

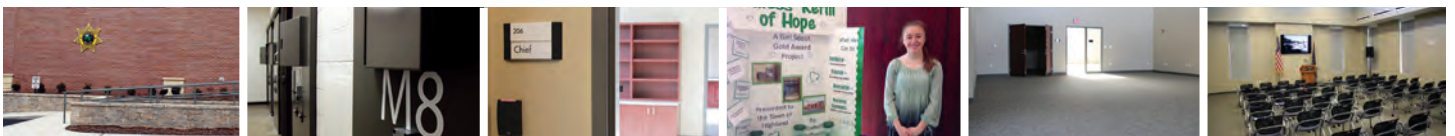
TOWN POPULATION: 23,546

STAFFING: The new facility is designed to accommodate 42 officers and 30 volunteers – with room to grow.

"Huge congratulations are in order and a big thank you to the Town Council. This new building has everything I would have wanted to see when I was an officer here."

LARRY WOODS

Highland Police Chief 1994-1997



ADA COMPLIANT

The department is ADA compliant from the entrance and hallways to the offices and restrooms. The facility is accessible to everyone regardless of mobility issues.

NEW JAIL CELLS

Jail cells employ the latest technology, which is designed to keep prisoners and officers safe. The configuration and location of the cells keeps prisoners separated from victims and the general public.

DEDICATED OFFICES

No more sharing desks! Workflow is enhanced with dedicated offices designed to make the paperwork part of the job as efficient as possible.

DRINKABLE WATER

Not only is it safe to drink the water from any faucet, the department received the gift of a special water fountain to go greener. The ADA accessible fixtures display the number of water bottles saved by being refilled at the site.

AMPLE STORAGE

Storage units are a thing of the past. All evidence is stored on-site, reducing the likelihood of critical items being misplaced or damaged while in transit.

COMMUNITY ROOM

Crime Watch and Police Commission meetings along with the Citizens Police Academy, training and the town courts can now meet on-site. The community room – and the facility itself – is equipped for emergency and disaster use.

COMMUNITY POLICING

NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH

Learn about crime trends in your neighborhood as well as innovative ways Highland police are fighting the bad guys during our bimonthly Crime Watch meetings.

Crime Watch topics run the gamut – from prevention to law enforcement. The meetings, which often feature guest speakers, spark interesting discussion and there is always plenty of time for questions and answers.

NEXT MEETING: The next Crime Watch meeting is at 6:30 p.m. March 9 in the Community Room of the new Highland Police Department. **QUESTIONS?** Call Cpl. Shawn Anderson at (219) 838-3184, ext. 4074 or email sanderson@highland.in.gov.

NIXLE ALERTS

Realizing the value of communicating to the community in real time, Police Chief Pete Hohnicki and Fire Chief Bill Timmer banded together to bring the Nixle emergency system to Highland.

That was in 2009. Today the popular system provides up-to-the-minute information on weather emergencies, road closures, even crimes-in-progress.

The service is free and allows residents to create an account that provides secure messaging by locale. In the event of an emergency, police send out details via text message, email – or both.

INFO: To register, log onto www.nixle.com.

G.R.E.A.T. PROGRAM

For several weeks in early summer, Police Sgt. Michael O'Donnell, the town's school resource officer, leads a group of enthusiastic school children through activities that focused on team-building and empowering pre-teens to make positive life choices.

G.R.E.A.T. is a national program developed and sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

INFO: Visit www.ojjdp.gov to learn more.

CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY

Safe communities start when citizens take ownership, working with law enforcement. That's where the Citizen's Police Academy comes in. The ten-week course allows residents to see how Highland's finest operates – up close and personal.

From ride-alongs to a trip to the shooting range to weekly classes that follow crime from its source to the courts, participants have the opportunity to become part of law enforcement's crime-fighting team.

Dep. Cdr. John Banasiak, coordinator of the academy, said the goal of every class is to involve interested citizens in learning policing from the inside. "It takes all of us working together to keep our community safe. We have been very fortunate we have had so many interested citizens who have taken part in this program.

The Citizen's Police Academy involves weekly classes as well as work outside the classroom. Topics included in the training are:

- Police Department tour
- Lake County courts and prosecutors office
- Gangs and dangerous drugs
- Police Employees Assistance Program
- Criminal investigation and evidence collection
- Firearms training simulator
- School Resource Officer
- Ride-alongs
- Police chaplain program

HOW TO APPLY: Applications are available online at www.highlandpolice.com. Simply fill out and mail to:

Highland Police Department
3315 Ridge Road
Highland, IN 46322

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call Deputy Cdr. John Banasiak at (219) 838-3184 or email jbanskiak@highland.in.gov.

